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INCOMING TELEGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF STATE—DIVISION OF COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS — TELEGRAPH BRANCH

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2/17/49 10:30 p.m.
CORRECTION UNDERSCORED

Control 6496

Rec'd February 17, 1949
8:59 a.m.

FROM: Moscow

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 394, February 17, 1 p.m.

URGENT

VOANY

Embassy noted VOA did not mention Strong arrest last night. In view continued ban on correspondents' despatches (EMBTEL 388, February 16), failure Foreign Office satisfactorily reply Embassy note and shock this arrest must be fellow-travelers throughout world, we believe VOA should exploit further.

Suggest emphasize (1) failure Soviets live up international agreement re permitting consular representatives interview American citizens; (2) ridiculcusness Soviet statement re "inadvertence officials connected foreign relations" in admitting Strong--since she moved freely in and out Soviet Union for 25 years; maintained residence Moscow and was accredited correspondent; (3) nature of regime which suddenly arrests and classifies person as "well-known intelligence agent" who for 25 years has enjoyed hospitality Soviet Union and has written only favorably of USSR.

While Embassy pointed out possibility arrest is ruse, it believes this less likely than first interpretation given in EMBTEL 368, February 15. Therefore, disappointing that Radio Bulletin quotes US spokesman as mentioning "ruse" possibility. Believe far more effective line for US is to consider case bona fide arrest unless and

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unless and until Strong's later statements should indicate otherwise.

Embassy reiterates that Strong's enormous left wing following must be considerably shaken this development and we should exploit to maximum.

KOHLER

SMD:CWD